327 Tientsin during 1954.[20] The new Taiyuan power plant, which is to be the largest thermal plant in China, is scheduled for completion in 1957. The plant was to be in partial operation in 1955.[21] A 130 kilometer (81.3 mi.) 110,000 volt transmission line now links Peking to Tientsin and Tangshan.[22] The Kuan-t'ing hydroplant will also be connected to this network.

The electric power industry of Communist China has been plagued by obsolete equipment, technical inefficiency, and a high incidence of accidents. The North China plants have not been an exception to this situation, and official Communist reports have invariably stressed the need to step up the rate of equipment utilization, to minimize line loss of coal consumption, to substitute low grade for high grade coal wherever possible, to ration household consumption of electricity, and to stagger the power load of industrial users. The new and expanded power plants and their geographical concentration in the Peking Tientsin and Taiyuan areas must be viewed in this light.

C. Iron and Steel

327 The two principal centers of North China's modern iron and steel industry are located at Taiyuan

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20/ NCNA, Tientsin, Jan. 22, 1954.

21/ NCNA, Mar. 18, 1954.

22/ NCNA, Mar. 18, 1954.

in Shansi and the Peking-Tientsin-Tangshan area in Hopei. Pig iron is produced at the Shih-ching-shan Iron and Steel Works near Peking, the Northwest Iron and Steel Works at Taiyuan and the Yang-ch'üan Iron Works at Yang-ch'üan in Shansi Province.

The Shih-ching-shan plant originally possessed three blast furnaces. Beginning in July 1949, operation was resumed, with a damaged 275-short-ton furnace producing 110 to 165 tons of pig iron a day. According to Communist reports, the daily output increased to 220 tons in early 1950, and later to 385 tons. A 418 ton capacity furnace was then being repaired while 660-ton furnace was being converted to 440-ton capacity. A later Communist report alleged that the output of pig iron at Shih-ching-shan in 1952 was 529 per cent over the highest record scored under Japanese occupation. 23/ The plant derives its iron ore from Lung-yen in former Chahar and its coal from Kai-lan, Ching-hsing, and Yang-ch'üan. Its total coking equipment, as reported in 1949, consisted of four batteries of 25 Semet-Solvay wasteheat ovens each and one regenerator coke-oven with a daily capacity of 220 tons.

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23/ Tu-pao Shou-ts'e [ Newspaper Reading Handbook] , Hankow, 1950, p. 511; China's Industry, Jan. 17, 1950, pp. 26-55; Feb. 1950, pp. 15-16 Hsin-hua Yüeh-pao [ New China Monthly] , Nov. 15, 1949, p. 112; NCNA, Peking, Mar. 20, 1953; Economic Weekly, 1953, No. 10, p. 17.

327 The northwest Iron and Steel Works was originally equipped with three 44-ton and one 132-ton blast furnaces, which were taken intact by the Communists. The output of pig iron in 1952 was said to be equal to at least 270 per cent of the record output under Japanese occupation. The plant is also equipped with one or two batteries of coke ovens. Little recent information is available on the iron works at Yang-ch'üan, which originally had three small blast furnaces. 24/

In the field of steel producti on, the Northwest Iron and Steel Works is probably the largest works in North China and was originally equipped with three 33-short ton open hearth furnaces, one 600-mm. large rolling mill, and one small rolling mill. Light steel rails were produced at this plant and attempts were made to convert the rolling mill to the production of heavy rails. Production of all steel and steel products in 1953 probably amounted to 15,400-16,500 tons a month. 25/

The Tangshan Steel Works, which derives its pig iron from Shih-ching-shan, was equipped with

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24/ Ibid.

25/ Ching-chi Ts'an-k'ao Tzu-liao [ Reference Materials on Economics], No. 29, July 1952, p. 7; China's Industry, Feb. 1950, p. 15; Ta-kung Daily, Dec. 23, 1952; Shan-hsi Jih-pao [ Shansi Daily], Taiyuan, Jan. 6, 1954.

•327 two furnaces and one rolling mill in 1949. The plant was subsequently expanded and a 58 per cent increase in ingot capacity was reported during 1954.[26] Steel bars and angles and tool steel are produced at the plant in addition to ingots.

The third steel plant in North China is the Tientsin Iron and Steel Works, which also derives its pig iron supply from Shih-ching-shan. It was originally equipped with one open-hearth furnace, two electric furnaces, and four rolling mills. Only one rolling mill, however, was reported to be in existence in 1949 when the Communists took over. One additional bar mill was said to have been restored to operation in 1953. Among the finished products are round and flat steel blooms and spring and crucible steel wire.[27]

D. Machinery Manufacturing

402 The development of a machinery industry in North China has very naturally taken place at the iron and steel centers at Taiyuan and in the Tientsin-Peking area.

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26. NCNA, Tangshan, July 5, 1954.

27. China's Industry, Feb. 1950, p. 15; Chin-pu Jih-pao [Progress Daily], Tientsin, Dec. 25, 1952; NCNA, Tangshan, Dec. 4, 1953; NCNA, Peking, Feb. 16, 1954.